

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PALERM 00660 010615Z
ACTION EUR-12

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R 301525Z JUN 78
FM AMCONSUL PALERMO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2525
INFO COMSIXTHFLT
USS ALBANY
AMEMBASSY ROME
USDAO ROME
USCINCEUR
USDOCO SOUH
USMISSION USNATO

UNCLAS PALERMO 0660

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: MPOL, IT
SUBJECT: COMSIXTHFLT VISIT TO PALERMO

1. AT RISK OF SOUNDING AUTO-CONGRATULATORY, WE BELIEVE JUNE 8-30 VISIT OF COMSIXTHFLT AND HIS FLAGSHIP, USS ALBANY, WAS A SUCCESS THAT IT SHOULD BE WRITTEN INTO RECORD. REAL CREDIT, IN ANY EVENT, GOES TO VICE ADMIRAL TRAIN AND TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF SIXTH FLEET STAFF AND THE ALBANY WHOSE INELLIGENCE, ENTERPRISE, WARMTH AND HOSPITALITY MADE LASTING AND VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION IN THIS ISLAND.

2. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED A FULL ROUND OF CALLS (MADE AND RETURNED) ON SENIOR REGIONAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES AND ON PALERMO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC LEADERS. CALLS PERMITTED OPPORTUNITY FOR POSITIVE, SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGES ON SIXTH FLEET'S ROLE IN NATO SECURITY AND ON SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION MADE TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL ECONOMY BY FLEET REPAIR EXPENDITURES IN ITALY.
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3. THESE THEMES WERE ALSO STRESSED IN EXTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE OF COMSIXTHFLT VISIT. RAI-TV CARRIED INTERVIEW WITH ADMIRAL TRAIN ON NATIONAL NOON NEWS. PRIVATE LOCAL TV CHANNELS ALSO DEVOTED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO ADMIRAL'S PRESS CONFERENCE ABOARD ALBANY AND TO INTERVIEWS WITH INDIVIDUAL REPORTERS. SICILIAN NEWSPAPERS ALSO GAVE VISIT GOOD COVERAGE. ROUND OF CALLS, OTHER MEETINGS

AND MEDIA EXPOSURE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT IS ISLAND WHERE HORIZON-
BROADENING IS AS USEFUL AS ITS RATE.

4. VISIT ALSO PERMITTED ITALIAN MOD RUFFINI TO HAVE HIS FIRST,
DIRECT EXPOSURE TO COMSIXTHFLT, HIS FLAGSHIP AND COMMAND. BOTH
AT JUNE 10 DINNER AT CONGEN RESIDENCE AND IN EXTENSIVE, NEXT-DAY
TOUR OF ALBANY, RUFFINI HAD EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AT FIRST
HAND ABOUT SIXTH FLEET'S MISSION, ITS PROBLEMS, ITS CAPABILITIES
AND ITS PERSONNEL. ADMIRAL TRAIN'S PERSONAL BRIEFING OF MOD IN
ALBANY'S FLAG PLOT FULLY EXPOSED RUFFINI TO SOVIET NAVAL AND AIR
ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

5. SOCIAL EVENTS INCLUDED JUNE 13 MAYOR'S RECEPTION IN PALERMO'S
CITY HALL AND JUNE 28 DINNER WHICH MAYOR HOSTED FOR ADMIRAL TRAIN,
LOCAL OFFICIALS, AND OFFICERS OF SIXTH FLEET AND ALBANY STAFF.
ADMIRAL TRAIN'S JUNE 26 DINNER ABOARD ALBANY FOR SENIOR LOCAL OFFI-
CIALS INCLUDING CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF PALERMO, SICILIAN REGIONAL
PRESIDENT, PALERMO MAYOR AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS AND THEIR
WIVES PERMITTED UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR LATTER TO EXPERIENCE FRIEND-
SHIP AND COMMUNALITY OF INTEREST WHICH ARE THE REAL STUFF OF THE
NATO RELATIONSHIP.

6. IN BRIEF, THE PALERMO VISIT OF COMSIXTHFLEET AND HIS FLAGSHIP
HAVE PROVIDED A RARE AND SUCCESSFUL OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE
LOCALLY THAT EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION AND FRIENDSHIP ARE AS
VITAL AS PHYSICAL MIGHT IN MAINTAINING A NAVAL PRESENCE AND A
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WESTERN DETERRENT. COLLINS

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NNN

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